

# Quality Resources shuts its doors, forces employees out

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CLEARWATER - A major employer in Pinellas County shut its doors on Monday and told employees they are no long operating in Clearwater.

Quality Resources, a telemarketing company, has been in business for more than 20 years but decided to close its location off U.S. 19 N.

Amanda Starnes said she has been with the company off and on for four years. She was there on Monday when she was told to leave.

"They said, um, everybody last call, log out, and then it was kind of quiet," she said.

Pinellas County Economic Development had Quality Resources listed as one of its top employers with 400 employees as of January 2015.

It's unclear exactly how many jobs were exactly lost on Monday, but Quality Resources has slowly cut more and more jobs.

Starnes said a couple hundred people were let go. But the owner, Cheryl Mercuris, told our reporter it was around 40 jobs. However, the numbers don't add up.

"I think on day (shift) there was at least probably 70 people just on the sales floor. Then there was the quality control, then you had all these managers, then HR, and then the IT. That's just on days," Starnes said.

Starnes said employees knew the industry wasn't what it used to be and knew of a potential closure but had no idea they would not be given even a day notice.

"I'm pregnant right now. Not a lot of people will hear somebody who will need maternity leave," she said.

Local Value Pack in Clearwater, a newer marketing company, is hoping to hire 20 to 50 employees with telemarketing experience.

"Looking for just direct sales people looking for something different," said Bart Hawk.  
"We make a product and sell a product locally."

Owner of Quality Resources, Cherly Mercuris, is known for her 2010 national headlines for spending \$500,000 on a two-week vacation rental.

Mercuris would not do an interview per our request but said repeatedly that her business closing isn't newsworthy and that Quality Resources isn't gone for good. But she's re-evaluating where to go next.

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